

FARM LABOR NEWS

Vol. 1, No. 6.

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Memphis, Tenn.

June, 1946

25¢ Per Year

Planes Chartered To Fly Members To N. J. Jobs

Nearly 400 student members of the National Farm Labor Union rode planes to jobs in New Jersey the last week of May and the first week in June.

These Union members are the first migratory workers to be transported to jobs by air. They are young women students of 25 southern colleges who are being employed during the summer months at the Deerfield Packing Company plant near Bridgeton, N. J.

Originally, the group had been scheduled to travel by train but when the railway strike came, arrangements were worked out for plane transportation to be furnished. Although the strike ended before the first flight was scheduled, the need for workers in New Jersey was acute so practically all of the group were sent by plane.

The girls travelled in the DC3 airliners chartered from the Wells Airline Co. of Philadelphia. The first flight was made from Jackson, Miss., on May 28th., and groups of 27 workers took off each day from various points throughout the South. The trips were made in 3 to 6 hours, whereas 12 to 48 hours would be required by rail.

Although this is the first movement of workers by air to New Jersey, college girls from the South have been employed at the Deerfield Packing Co. plant at Bridgeton for the past three summers. They are recruited each year by the Union with the cooperation of officials of their college. They become full fledged members of the National Farm Labor Union.

This year there were over 1,000 applications made for these summer jobs but only 400 could be accepted. The students are housed in special dormitories which accommodate 20 workers each. The dormitories are equipped in the same manner as those provided for Waves and Wacs during war time. Board and room cost each worker \$8.40 per week. Student workers are paid 57½¢ an hour plus a bonus of 5¢ for each hour, provided they remain until their colleges open in September.

The students work under the closed shop contract between the Meat and Cannery Workers Union (Local 56, A. F. of L.), and the Deerfield Packing Co. Their membership dues are 50¢ a week while employed. There are no other dues or fees. At the end of the season, all receive a paid up membership in the National Farm Labor Union for a year.

**Pass Your Farm Labor News
On To Your Neighbor.
Let Them Know What The
Union Is Doing For Its
Members.**

Union Organizer Decorated For Bravery



Captain Barney B. Taylor (U. S. Army retired), organization director of the National Farm Labor Union, recently received the nation's second highest military decoration, the Distinguished Service Cross. The award was made at Little Rock, Ark., May 16th, by the U. S. Army. Only the Congressional Medal of Honor is higher than the D.S.C.

The citation stated that Captain Taylor led a patrol into enemy territory in the invasion of France and that he obtained information which "was employed to great advantage in planning subsequent action against the enemy."

Captain Taylor was retired by the army for disability incurred in combat and became organization director for the Union in April.

Alabama Strike Breaker Leads Arkansas Mob

The setting up of an illegal vigilante committee in the Veterans Industrial Association by James Karam of Lake Village, Arkansas, has been publically announced.

Evidence in the possession of Arkansas citizens reveals that this is not the first venture in strike breaking by James Karam. According to information received from Gadsden, Ala., Karam was a leader of the company thugs employed by Goodyear Rubber Co. in that town which sought to break up organization of rubber workers in 1938. Labor organizers were tarred and feathered, several union members were killed by company gunmen. The U. S. Department of Justice was sent in and organized violence ceased. The rubber workers organized Goodyear 100 per cent and men like Karam were driven from the city.

After leaving Alabama just ahead of the arrival of the FBI, Karam set up a business in Lake Village. At the end of the war he returned to his

(Continued On Page Four)

Negroes To Vote In Arkansas

Under direction of local leaders of the National Farm Labor Union, thousands of rural Negroes who have paid their poll tax will attempt to vote in the Democratic primaries which are to be held August 2nd. in Arkansas. The Arkansas law provides that separate primary elections shall be held at the expense of the county for colored citizens, however, to date it is reported that only 3 counties in the state have appropriated money for holding "Jim Crow" primary elections.

Twist Co-Op Farm May Renew Lease

The Twist Co-operative Leasing Association, composed of 118 Arkansas families, is now negotiating a new agreement with the heirs of Twist Brothers estate to extend their lease for at least seven more years.

This co-operative farming project started in 1937 by Farm Security Administration, has been an outstanding success despite mismanagement by agents hired by FSA. The

Cotton Choppers Want \$5 A Day, 10 Hours Work

Just as cotton chopping got underway on the plantations of the mid-South the last week in May, the National Farm Labor Union raised a demand for a wage of \$5 for a 10 hour day for all farm labor.

50,000 handbills published by the District Councils of the Union appeared on every plantation in every rural community of the delta plantation area of Arkansas, Mississippi, and Alabama. Workers were told, "Don't work for less than a living wage." Wage rates being offered by plantation owners were as low as \$1.50 in some areas while in others, wages of \$3 to \$4.50 a day were being paid.

Planters were notified that if they wanted to hire labor at \$5 for a 10 hour day, the Union would furnish good workers for them.

It was planned for the handbills to be distributed at the same time but due to the strike of railway workers, it was not possible to get them delivered to remote areas on time. Nevertheless, distribution was so effective that rumors spread that a man in an airplane making 500 miles an hour scattered them over the plantations. Just how the Union demands came to be tacked up on barn doors, fence posts, telephone poles, and carefully placed on the front porches of the planters, the rumors did not say.

Demagogues May Lose In Mississippi

Theo. G. "The Man" Bilbo recently asked to be excused from the United States Senate while he hurried back to Mississippi, as he said, "To keep three peckerwoods from taking my job." The Senate breathed a sigh of relief and granted him leave of absence to return to Mississippi to start his campaign of Yankee and Negro baiting. Bilbo is opposed by Tom Ellis, Ross Collins, and Nelson Levings. Collins is receiving organized labor's support but Ellis seems to be the leading candidate to succeed "The Man" Bilbo.

Likewise, John Rankin, Negro, Jew and Red baiter, has his first serious opposition in the past 20 years, in holding down a seat in Congress. Rankin is being opposed by Claude F. Clayton, attorney and ex-army colonel of Tupelo and by Rev. Charles G. Hamilton of Aberdeen. There are 30,000 ex-servicemen in Rankin's district who are entitled to vote in the July 2nd. primary and Clayton or Hamilton may win over Congressman Rankin.

co-op has accumulated property and cash of nearly half a million dollars. All loans made by the government to the co-operative have been repaid.

Our Guest Column



JAMES G. PATTON

Mr. Patton is President of the Farmers Educational and Co-operative Union of America, which is also known as the National Farmers Union. It is an organization of 200,000 small land owning farmers, most of whom are in the western states. His union is the most progressive and aggressive of the big three farm organizations. The National Farmers Union and the National Farm Labor Union are often confused because of the similarity in names and in the programs both support.

We welcome this opportunity to present Mr. Patton, President of the National Farmers Union, to readers of the Farm Labor News.

The Negro Farmer In War And Peace

By JAMES G. PATTON

Most people do not realize the very important role the Negro farmer has played in the production of food and fibre, particularly cotton, in our agricultural economy. Negro farm families have never been able to enjoy even minimum standards of education, housing, health, or nutrition. The mechanical cotton picker and the flame blocker will soon bring a major economic and social crisis to the South and all of America. Again, as always in the past,

Negroes will probably be the citizens who will suffer most.

It is the responsibility of the American people to aid the sharecroppers, tenants, and small farm owners of the South, a very large percentage of whom are Negroes, in the readjustment which they will be forced to make with the mechanization and technological developments in cotton. All of us must see that the small farmer, Negro and white in the South, has an opportunity to become vocal in governmental matters. We must repeal the poll tax. We must make it possible for small farmers to organize freely, without economic and social pressures being used to prevent action from being taken in their own best interests.

New farming opportunities in the Middle West and in newly irrigated areas, must be provided for Negro farmers of the South. An equality of opportunity in industry must be guaranteed. The repeal of the poll tax, the passage of a Permanent Fair Employment Practices Act, and the elimination of restricted covenant real estate ordinances, are minimum necessities for economic and social freedom. Restrictive property ownership laws such as have been unfairly enacted in California against the Japanese and other nationalities, must not be applied to the Negro farmer seeking new opportunities.

All of us must work to see that full employment is maintained, that every man who is able to work and wants to work has a job with sufficient income to buy a high standard of living. The best single guarantee against unfair discrimination in all lines and for equal opportunity is to have full employment for everyone. If this can be brought about, the adjustments caused by technological advances in agriculture will be made easier not only for the Negro farmer, but for all farmers in the lower income brackets.

If we are to be the great example for democracy in the world, we must begin to put democracy into practice in full fledged form here at home, by providing equality of opportunity to all, regardless of race or creed, in all things, economic, social and political.

Member Writes About Farm Machinery

Dear Sir:

I have been reading in the Farm Labor News about the cotton chopper and picking machine. I want to say this, the machines take the place of 100 workers, and say it takes at the most 10 men to keep the machines running, haul cotton to the gin, ship cotton to the mill, and 10 more to manufacture and sell the machines. That leaves 80 men to do something else. You take 1,000 machines and that leaves 80,000 workers out of a job. I want to know where they are going to get jobs. Will these machines go in the stores to buy groceries and drygoods? I see what they will do but I also see a thousand things they won't do. What do you think about this business?

B. C. Dewesse,
Kennett, Mo.

Frame-Up Of Union Member Backfires

The case of George B. Mayberry of Stafford, Alabama, was tried in a justice of the peace court in Carrollton, Ala., on May 6th.

Mr. W. A. Davis, local attorney of Aliceville, represented Mayberry who was accused of setting a field on fire. The fire spread and burned a building owned by an absentee landlord. The court assessed a fine of \$15 and costs on Mayberry who was active in starting a Union local at Stafford. The attorney refused to permit the payment of the fine and served notice of an appeal to circuit court. The Union member was released on bond.

It was clear that Mayberry was being convicted not of having committed a crime, but because he helped organize the Union. It is expected that the case will be thrown out of court when it meets in the early fall.

Union Lawyer Runs For Lieut. Governor Of Ark.



K. T. SUTTON

Mr. K. T. Sutton of Helena, Arkansas, attorney for the Union since 1940, has announced his candidacy for the post of Lieut. Governor of Arkansas subject to action of the Democratic primary, August 6th.

Mr. Sutton is a native of the Arkansas Ozark Mountains and is a firm believer in the legal rights of all citizens. He first came into prominence in Arkansas in 1936 when he broke up the system of leasing convicts in Cross County to private individuals. As a result of his work, the state legislature abolished this form of peonage in Arkansas.

Wage Board Raises Arkansas Picking Rate

The USDA Wage Board in Arkansas has recently raised the price of pulling cotton to \$1.40 per 100 pounds. It had been set originally at \$1 per 100. As the season advanced and no rush to the cotton fields developed, the Arkansas and Mississippi planters were sorry they got the government to cut the wage rates of pickers. There were a number of violations of the wage ceilings which were investigated by the FBI in both states.

How To Get A Union Job After Crops Are Laid By

All members of the National Farm Labor Union who are paid up for the year 1946 are eligible for a short time job this summer in a cannery, or on a farm on the east coast at better wages than can be earned here in the South.

To get one of these jobs, a man or woman must be over 18 years of age and not over 60 years old. They must be able bodied workers, able and

willing to do a good day's work. Every man or woman must have a health card from a doctor to show that he or she has had a blood test and is free of venereal disease. They must be ready to leave when they are called to go out on a job.

To be sent on one of the jobs, tear out the job application blank below, turn it over to the nearest local officer or organizer to be sent in to the

National Office—or mail it yourself to Box 443, Memphis 1, Tenn.

Then if you have not had a blood test in the past 3 months, go to the County Health Office and have a test made free, or go to a private doctor and have him make a blood test. Get a card like the one on the right corner of this sheet, signed by a doctor. Get this done NOW. It sometimes takes two or three weeks to get a

health card. You can't be sent on a job unless you have one.

After doing these two things, be ready to leave when called. Most of the jobs will be open soon after July 15th. Don't miss out on the shipment when you are notified to come to Memphis for transportation.

If you are not a paid up member for 1946, pay your dues now so you will be in good standing and eligible for a summer job.

JOB APPLICATION

My name is _____ My age is _____ yrs.

My address is _____ ROUTE NUMBER BOX NUMBER TOWN STATE

I am a member of Local No. _____ Located at _____

My dues are paid up until _____ 19____. I am white _____ colored _____ (Check X)

I will be ready for a job about _____ I will work until _____

I want to work in a factory _____ I want farm work _____

HEALTH CARD

KAHN

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT A WASSERMANN TEST WAS MADE FOR:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

ON _____

MONTH

DAY

YEAR

THE RESULT WAS _____

SIGNED BY _____

TITLE _____

On-The-Farm Training For Ex-Servicemen

By DR. GEORGE S. MITCHELL
Director Veterans Affairs, Southern
Regional Council, Atlanta, Ga.

On the farm training provides a way for veterans of World War II to draw GI pay while learning how to farm well.

The training has to be arranged by the different states, and the GI pay, of course, comes from the Veterans Administration. Almost all of the Southern states have signed contracts with the Veterans Administration under which on-the-farm training will be set up. About thirty-five states altogether now have on-the-farm training.

Training Is Educational

The general outlines are the same all over the country, but each state has its own special plan, and what any veteran can get depends on how the plan is worked out in his state and in his county. The idea is that the veteran will be given some teaching in classrooms at the nearest school which has an Agricultural Teacher and will be taught some by visits to his own and other farms, but will learn mostly by farming well himself.

Usually the veteran has to agree to take on not less than two hundred hours a year of classroom teaching. That comes to about half a day a week of going to classes. It can be lumped some into slack farming seasons. On top of that the veteran is visited where he works by a Vo-Ag Teacher, say, a couple of times a month. Also, the veteran has to be prepared to go occasionally to other people's farms for demonstrations showing new methods.

The Veterans Administration pays State Governments so much per month tuition money for each veteran who gets on-the-farm training. Usually it is around twenty-two dollars a month. The State Departments of Education use it to pay for running the program and for hiring agricultural teachers and working with the veterans.

\$65 A Month Wages Paid By Government

A veteran receiving on-the-farm training draws his full GI pay from the Veterans Administration—sixty-five dollars a month if he is single, or ninety dollars a month if he has dependents. If he works his own place, of course he gets no wages on top of this, unless you call what he makes from his farm wages. If he works directly under a farmer, he

The Good Life At Delmo Homes

By DAVID S. BURGESS
"The Preacher"

During the last two months, a new burst of Union activity has taken place. Much of this was inspired by the Farm Labor Conference at Kennett the last of March. A dozen residents of the East Prairie Delmo Homes formed Local 42 of the National Farm Labor Union. M. D. Heppie was elected President; Burrell Williams, Vice President; and "The Preacher," Secretary-Treasurer. M. D. Heppie was also named local organizer. Filled with missionary spirit, the Union members have been holding meetings all over the area. Two public mass meetings have been in East Prairie. Members of the Local took the lead in demanding \$5 a day for cotton chopping. Before the Union demand was raised, wages were \$2 to \$3 for a 10 hour day.

Work Projects Started

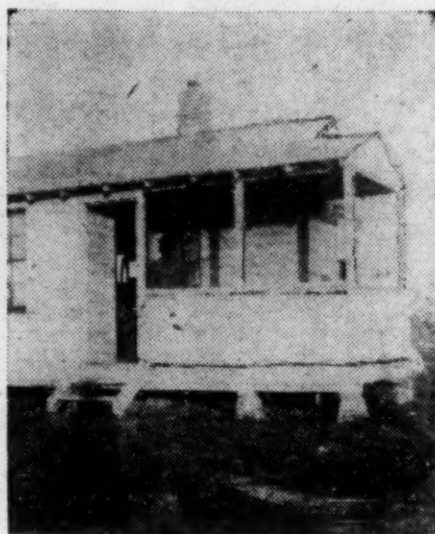
Sunday schools are now being held every Sunday at Kennett, Gray Ridge, and East Prairie Projects. In April, members of the Union took the lead in building a brush arbor at East Prairie. The arbor was used in conducting Easter services. Carlos Hall said, "Building a brush arbor is a good way to prove to the community that the Union has the good of all at heart." Plans are now under way to re-model the community buildings at Lilbourn and at East Prairie this summer. This will be a project for a group of 8 college students who will donate their labor during the summer months. Community buildings are needed at the Wardell white project, and at the Wyatt project. Kennett already has a fine community building and the Wardell

gets wages from the farmer on top of his GI pay. The training period may last for from one to several years, depending on local regulations.

The program is well worked out and is already in use in many places for owners and renters. If a man has his own place, or has a written lease, running for several years on a reasonably good full-sized farm, he can usually get on the program. He has to agree to work the place according to a farm plan, and if he is a renter, his landlord must agree about anything special that has to be done to the buildings or about terracing and other things, to build up the land. Nobody expects that it is going to be much of a problem to get on-the-farm training going well for owners or renters. The problem comes with the veterans who need it the most—the croppers and laborers.

Hard To Get On Program

The first couple of Southern states



An exterior view of a Delmo Labor Home.

Negro project residents have remodelled a building for their use.

Election In August

Primary elections will take place the first week in August. All men and women 21 years of age or over, can vote if they have lived in the state of Missouri one year and in the county for 30 days. All who have not registered in the past elections may do so at the time the primaries are held.

Rumors persist that a few members of the Union have lost their jobs because of Union activity. If any members of the Union has lost his job for this reason, he should report it to President Mitchell, Box 443, Memphis.

Brother Thatcher of Kennett said, "Back in 1939 I was out of a place and the Union helped me get a job and a home. I have never forgotten that and now I'm a 100 per cent Union man."

that signed up on the program hardly let croppers or laborers have a look-in on it. But now the program can be open to some people who do not own land or rent a place. If a man works for a farmer who will agree to teach the veteran how to be a dairy farmer, or a fruit farmer, or a truck farmer, or an all-around general farmer, or some special skill of that kind, it should be possible to work out the training program for him. Under this plan the veteran signs at the Vo-Ag School for the classroom teaching just described, and then works most of the time for a farmer who teaches him the special skill.

How Ex-Service Men Are Selected

In counties which go in for on-the-farm training, an advisory committee is supposed to be set up for this program. It will have something to say about picking the veterans and the

Farm Labor Union Strong In England

The greatest gain in membership of a trade union in England has been made by the National Union of Agricultural Workers. The Union which is about 60 years old, has a total of 130,000 members. The President of the Union, Mr. Gooch, was elected to the House of Commons in the recent landslide election of the British Labor Party. Several other organizers for the National Union of Agricultural Workers also won seats in the British Parliament.

The National Farm Labor Union (STFU), is in communication with officials of the National Agricultural Workers Union. Plans are under consideration for an international meeting of all farm labor unions to be held in London this year. H. L. Mitchell and J. E. Clayton have been named as delegates to attend the International Conference.

How To Get Your Copy Of Farm Labor News

The Farm Labor News is being sent to all paid up members of the Union. All who paid in 1945 are still on the mailing list. After April 1, members who are in arrears will be cut off the list and will not get the Farm Labor News. Any paid up member who is not receiving the Farm Labor News each month, should write to the office giving his name and full address. Non-members who want to get the Farm Labor News must subscribe. The rate is 25¢ a year. Stamps, money orders, or cash may be sent to the Farm Labor News, Box 443, Memphis 1, Tennessee. Also tell us the place where you get your mail. Give route number, box number, town, and state.

farms they will train on and perhaps about payments by farmers to any trainees they take on.

Program Slow In Starting

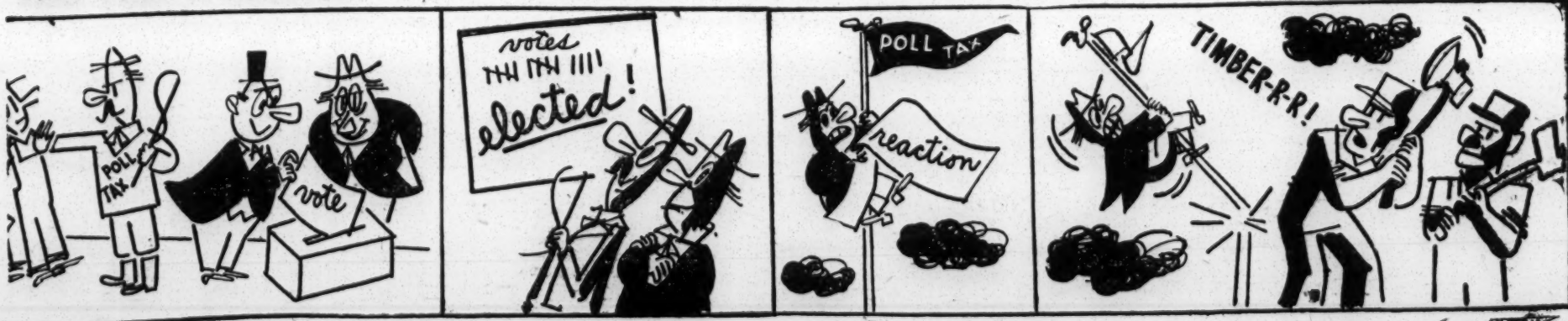
Many officials have been slow to get this going, because they are afraid that farmers will underpay and underteach the veterans they take on. This is a real danger of course. The Veterans Administration is hiring training officers who will check up to stop abuses.

Trained Farmers Needed On Southern Farms

Southern agriculture needs every trained man it can get. Here is the Federal Government offering to pay the cream of our youth to learn modern farming. Every veteran interested in farming would do well to get hold of his Vo-Ag Teacher and try to get onto this plan.

SEN. PHIL I. BLUSTER

by Ajay and Abrashkin



A Message From Across The Sea

Dear Friend:

It was fine to hear from you again and to know that we may be seeing you over here sometime. It's awfully nice of you to suggest sending something but really and truly, we are quite alright. In fact, I am trying to send things out of this country to my friends in Europe who are really having a bad time. London and the industrial towns are a bit short but mostly of things like fruit and any of the more interesting foods. But we have never been in real difficulties. I have my own cows and poultry, as well as growing corn (oats), turnips, potatoes, hay, etc. We all have sheep too. This is a very beautiful county with high hills and sheltered valleys. There are eight farms just round about. I am president of the National Farmers Union—the local farmers' body. But only three of these farms have any hired men on them. (On one, the farmer himself is very old) and we all work ourselves. I have just come in from sowing out a field—that is, under-sowing an oat crop with hay seed. I sowed and my man harrowed, then I milked while he finished. I have a land girl (member of the woman's land army) but she is only 15.

I have suggested to my (hired) man that he might join the farm servants' union, but he only laughs at me; he is just as much interested in the farm as I am and we go together to farm sales and so on. All the farms round here are the same. Most of us have attested herds (clean and tubercle free), and we grow good seed potatoes.

The other people here are fishermen, a fine lot of folk. They have done well lately.

Brookins will have told you my husband is a Labour M.P. (member of Parliament) and I am a County Councillor. The children all got through the war safe. My second son has just demobbed (discharged from army). He ended as a major. I have two nice grandchildren too. Do remember me to all the old friends. I often think of you all. If you can send things, send them to France or any of the European countries. Do! But we, though we often grumble and get cross, are perfectly alright, and the working classes have, I am glad to say, been fed better during the war than at other times.

Yours,

Naomi Mitchinson

Carradals House

Carradale, Campbelltown

Argyll, Scotland

Mrs. Mitchinson is a famous

Farm Labor News

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The constitution of the Union provides that 25c a year shall be set aside from each member's annual dues to pay for this monthly paper.

Bundle rates to agents—10 copies or more, 1c each copy.

All non members making contributions of \$1 or more will receive 1 year's subscription to the Farm Labor News; 25c of each contribution is allocated to pay for 1 year's subscription.

Application for entry as second class mail is pending.

Address all communications to Farm Labor News, Box 443, Memphis 1, Tenn.

We Face The Future



Alabama Strike Breaker Leads Arkansas Mob

(Continued From Page One)

profession as a strike breaker, forming the so-called "Veterans Industrial Association" which is against unions and specializes in running a free employment service to furnish strike breakers to plants where working men are struggling for their rights. Within the last 60 days, Karam sent bands of hoodlums into Little Rock to take the jobs of men employed by the Wrape Stave Mill and to another strike bound lumber company in Louisiana.

The use of the name "veteran" by Karam's strike breaking outfit is being challenged in the courts by organizations of ex-servicemen. The VIA admits any one as a member regardless of whether or not he served in the armed forces. Likewise, the bonafide veterans' organizations are interested in knowing whether or not Karam himself ever served in any armed force other than that directed against organized labor.

FEPC Fight Goes On

The fight for a Fair Employment Practices Commission was not killed by the filibuster in the United States Senate.

The National Council for FEPC has called on all organizations and individuals to continue the fight. The bill is not dead. It can again be brought up for passage in Congress this year if enough pressure can be brought to bear by its friends.

A mass meeting at Madison Square Garden in New York on February 28th., will start the campaign to pass the measure.

novelist in England. In 1935, she visited Arkansas and spent some time with the Union. While here, she and another famous English woman led a sharecropper demonstration in the town of Marked Tree. For several years before the war, she kept in touch with us by letter.

The only ray of hope for the millions of Negro and white farm people in the South who may soon be dispossessed from the land, lies in building a strong organization of, by, and for the people. As hundreds of members of the National Farm Labor Union come together in meetings each week, they know that they do not stand alone and there is confidence as they face the future together.

The National Farm Labor Union is growing each day. Many new people are coming into its ranks. The Union is enlarging its staff of field organizers.

Workers Must Get Health Cards Early

Dear Sir:

During the past month I have investigated the possibility of getting health cards in Arkansas. Under the state law, no local health center is required to give written information on blood tests unless a person has taken 3 typhoid shots. After the shots

are taken, the health center will issue a card. I therefore urge every Union member in Arkansas who wants to go out on a job in July, to start now to get his health card. It will take nearly 30 days to get a card. You can't go to work in a food plant in New Jersey without a health card.

George Stith, Secretary,
Central Arkansas District Council

THE FOUR FREEDOMS FUND

Every industry and every group of people in the United States except the farm laborers have a voice in Washington, D. C. The large cotton planters are ably represented by the Farm Bureau which has an office in the Capital and maintains the most effective lobby in Washington. The small land owning farmers are also ably represented by officials of the National Farmers Union. Only the farm laborer, and the southern sharecropper, has no full time representative.

The National Farm Labor Union proposed to set up a "Farm Labor Lobby" in Washington. We figured it would cost \$10,000 a year to run an office and employ a full time Washington representative.

The question is—do members of the Union and our friends all over the country want the problems of our people presented to the President of the United States, to the Congress of the United States, and to the great American public? If so, this is the time for all men and women to come forward and make it possible to put over this program.

Are there 100 men and women who will put up \$100 each?

Are there 200 men and women who will put up \$50 each?

Are there 1,000 men and women who will put up \$10 each?

Are there 10,000 men and women who will put up \$1 each?

If there are this many people who are willing to help bring the Four Freedoms to Farm Labor—the job can be done in five years.

FOUR FREEDOMS FUND

I WILL GIVE \$_____ now to the Four Freedoms Fund, and I will give

\$_____ more to the Four Freedoms Fund by _____ 194_

MONTH DAY

My name is _____

I get my mail at _____ ROUTE BOX _____ TOWN _____ STATE _____

I am a member of _____ Local No. _____

I am not a member, but I want to help. () Check X.

SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO BOX 443, MEMPHIS, TENN.

From the Raleigh News and Observer, July 22, 1946

ALL IN ONE

Greenville, July 21.- L. N. James of Bethel has built a machine to be used with his tractor for fertilizing, listing, marking and watering sweet potatoes as they are set. W. H. Pruden, assistant Pitt County farm agent, says that James used the new machine with good results in planting about 45 acres of potatoes this season.

The machine is really two devices. One fertilizes and lists two rows at the time. The waterer knocks down the ridge, marks the place for the plants to be set, and waters the planting area. Hand labor then drops and pegs the plants.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

8-23-, 1946

TO: Dr. Mitchell

FROM: RRS.

This material is referred to you for:

1. Information ☐ 2. Consideration ☐

3. Signature ☐ 4. Recommendation ☐

5. Reply ☐ 6. Suggested reply ☐

7. Please circulate to desk(s) of:

Miss Clay ☐ Dr. Reid ☐

Miss Fisher ☐ Dr. Johnson ☐

 ☐ ☐

8. Please return to this office. ☐

9. Please return to secretary for filing. ☐



Revolution in Cotton

by J. Mitchell Morse

COTTON FARMING, we used to say in the South, required three items of capital equipment: a strong back, a weak mind and an immunity to sunstroke. It involved, we said, three operations: cotton was planted in the spring, mortgaged in the summer and left to rot on the ground in the fall. We called it the White Plague. The citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, went so far as to erect a monument to the boll weevil because he restricted production.

But things are going to be different from now on. The mechanical cotton-picker has started an industrial revolution that is going to change the whole economic structure of the South. Its effects will be felt all over the country and to some extent all over the world.

More than a million families in 16 states spend their lives producing cotton. On many plantations the plowing, planting, weeding and spraying are done by machine, but until recently all the picking was done by hand. In this one respect the growing of cotton had not been improved since the days of the Pharaohs—and the economic status of the pickers was not much better than that of the Pharaohs' slaves. Their hourly wages are roughly equivalent to the price of a pound of cotton. During the lean years of five-cent cotton they made five cents an hour, or 50 cents a day, or \$3.50 a week. The wartime boom, which pushed the price of cotton up to 22 cents a pound, raised their wages to \$13.20 a week, but wartime prices kept their standard of living from getting too luxurious. Moreover, they don't work every week. The cotton season is only about a hundred days, so that even during the boom a sharecropper or tenant or field hand on a cotton plantation could make only some \$220 a year. That is not what we think of as the American standard of living. Incomes like that for a million families not only stunt the growth of the South but have a bad effect on the economy of the whole country, for these families are not much of a market for anything. Most of the people who grow cotton never get out

of debt. Their economic dependency begets a moral subserviency which is reflected in the whole life of the South. They are sorry evidence of the truth of Louis XIV's remark that credit supports agriculture as the rope supports the hanged.

BUT LOW as their wages are, in impersonal economic terms they are too high. A good average cotton-picker can harvest only about 15 pounds an hour, and this slowness pushes production costs up to a point where American cotton can't compete in the world market with the increasing crops of Mexico, Brazil, Egypt, India, China, Russia, Persia, Australia, Syria and the Central African colonies. In 1925 we dominated the world cotton market. Now it gets along largely without us. As the accompanying table shows, we have lost most of our export customers. Our government protects the domestic market by means of a tariff that keeps out the foreign crop, and we make up the difference by paying unnecessarily high prices for our shirts and sheets. Growing cotton in America and harvesting it by hand is not an economic activity. Two facts glare from the figures presented herewith:

1. The United States, which had always produced more than half the world supply before 1933, has produced less than half every year since 1933, including the war years, when foreign production shrank.

2. The value of American exports has followed a jagged downward course for 15 years. The slight recovery that occurred during the war was purely inflationary, as was the domestic boom.

Control by the federal government of prices of raw cotton will check the inflation and help the domestic manufacturer, but it won't necessarily help the consumer and it certainly won't help the farmer or increase production or fundamentally improve our position in the world market. The prices of American cotton will remain 50 to 60 percent higher than those of similar grades grown in other countries. Ceilings designed to correct that condition would be suicidal. Financial measures alone cannot save a system of production which is basically uneconomic.

After some 20 years of experiments, the first commercially practical picker is now on the market. Its historical importance is comparable to that of the cotton gin. It is more than 60 times as fast as a man: where a man picks 15 pounds an hour, the machine picks 900 to 1,000. Experiments in Mississippi over a period of three years showed that the average cost of picking a bale was \$32.14 by hand and \$5.83 by machine. The \$5.83 includes amortization of the purchase price of

Almost unnoted by press and public, a profound economic revolution is approaching in the South. J. Mitchell Morse reports in the accompanying article that the mechanical cotton picker, which may restore our competitive position in the world market, seems certain to bring the doom of the small cotton farm, and to displace 800,000 out of one million families in 16 states, whose members now have about a hundred days' work a year with a cash income of \$220.

The author, who himself comes from the South, is a former member of the staff of the Nation, now a free-lance writer in New York City.

THE STORY OF COTTON

(All figures in millions)

Year	World Production ¹	Foreign Production ¹	— U. S. Production ¹ —		— U. S. Exports —	
	(Bales)	(Bales)	(Bales)	(Value)	(Bales) ²	(Value) ²
1925....	28.2	12.1	16.1	\$1,579	8.0	\$1,060
1930....	26.2	12.3	13.9	659	7.0	658
1932....	24.4	11.4	13.0	424	8.7	340
1934....	23.8	14.1	9.6	596	7.5	421
1936....	31.5	19.1	12.4	764	5.9	384
1938....	29.0	17.1	11.9	514	5.6	307
1940....	30.5	18.0	12.6	621	6.1	344
1942....	28.0	15.2	12.8	1,214	1.1	99
1944....	27.1	14.9	12.2	1,299	1.0	115
1945....	20.0	11.0	9.0	1,000	3.0	279

¹ Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics.² Source: Department of Commerce.

\$3,750 and a proportional share of the annual upkeep cost of \$250. *On a medium-size plantation the machine will pay for itself in one season.* Former Secretary of Agriculture Claude Wickard believes it will enable us to regain our former export position.

The principle of the machine is simple; it was the working out of the details that took 20 years. Briefly, it consists of two rotating drums studded with rotating spindles, which are prickly and moist. Steel plates hold the cotton plants in place and the spindles strip off the ripe lint. The unripened bolls, with their hard, smooth covering, simply pass between the spindles and are not injured. Rotating rubber disks remove the lint from the spindles and a vacuum pump pulls it up into a removable basket.

This is the final step in the mechanization of cotton growing. For many years cotton has been planted by mechanical seeders, weeded by tractor-drawn flame-throwers that burn away the grass and weeds but not the tough cotton stalks, and sprayed by low-flying planes. Now the harvesting bottleneck, which required large numbers of workers living in idleness most of the year, has been removed. Cotton farming can at last become an economic activity.

But not for everybody. The small farmer is out. Mechanization without mass production doesn't pay. The huge orchards of California are run from office buildings in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and it may well be that within the next decade America's cotton will be grown on huge mechanized farms capitalized at millions of dollars and run from office buildings in Atlanta and New Orleans. The small farmer, with his 40 acres and his mule, will be bought or mortgaged out, to become a wage worker on a plantation run like a factory, or he will move to the city, or he will plant something else.

This last course will unquestionably be a good thing. The federal and state Departments of Agriculture have been preaching diversification since World War I, but the cotton-minded farmers of the South have remained largely unconverted. While warehouses bulged with the unsold crops of last year and the year before, these

victims of cotton fever have bravely planted more, unmoved by lectures, demonstrations, falling prices, rising debts, the boll weevil or the sheriff.

The change will undoubtedly involve a great deal of suffering. Whole families will be not only unemployed but uprooted, stranded in the country without a house to live in or a place to go or a dollar in their pockets. With complete mechanization, the 150 man-hours that used to go into a bale of cotton will be reduced to 25 or 30, and about 80 percent of the people involved will no longer be needed. What is to become of them?

It is not within the province of private enterprise to deal with problems of this nature. Strictly speaking, social problems are irrelevant to the operation of a private business. We cannot expect the new agricultural industrialists to have either the will or the capacity to handle them; that is a function of government. Whatever relief is necessary will be forthcoming, regardless of which party is in office. Even the least sympathetic Republican administration could not afford to let mil-



Rube Goldberg in the New York Sun

Still at Large

lions of people die of starvation. But more fundamental measures than relief will be necessary.

The rural population of the South has always been a threat to labor standards in other parts of the country. These impoverished people are the basis of the euphemistically named "Southern differential" in wages, which has enabled many Chambers of Commerce, using the bait of cheap labor, to induce New England and Midwestern textile manufacturers to move their plants to the South, irresponsibly leaving unemployment behind them and establishing debased industrial standards in their new locations. But the threat will now take a new form: migration.

Organized labor in industrial cities, struggling to maintain its standards, will be faced with a flood of unemployed and unorganized workers from the South, accustomed to poverty, suspicious of unionism, unaware of the need for solidarity, unaccustomed to rational argument and susceptible to the sweat-streaked appeal of revivalist demagogues.

The domestic-help situation, North and South, will doubtless be improved from the standpoint of the employer; the wages and working conditions of the employee, which were much improved during the war,

will deteriorate, and we may even see a revival of the disgraceful "slave markets" that appeared in New York during the thirties, with prospective servants standing along the curbs like prostitutes and prospective mistresses driving up and looking them over.

And there will be other problems. Many of the migrants will be Negroes, a fact that will play into the hands of reactionary employers who have not hesitated in the past and do not now hesitate to encourage racial and religious antagonisms among their workers.

There may also be a retrogressive revival of the regional and local chauvinism of the thirties, which regarded people from another state or even another county as "foreigners." Intercultural tension has increased alarmingly during and since the war, and the disemployment of several million race-ridden Southerners in the next decade will not lessen it.

These problems are not new, of course. The mechanical cotton-picker did not cause them, but it will surely aggravate them. The important thing for us to realize is that they are national problems, too big and too complex to be dealt with effectively by uncoordinated individuals or groups. Economic and social planning on a national scale is essential.



Report on Russia

III. The Soviet Union and Its Neighbors

by Earl Browder

THERE IS IN AMERICA an almost impenetrable wall of misinformation about the political and economic development of the nations immediately to the west of the Soviet Union. This is much tougher than any "iron curtain." It is formed by the constant reiteration in varied forms of the falsehood that Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have been "incorporated" into the Soviet Union and the Soviet political and economic system installed there. So long as this

misinformation distorts and colors American thinking about international relations it will continue to be extremely difficult to develop and apply a realistic American foreign policy.

The truth of the matter is that all these countries are being reorganized under regimes based upon a coalition of *all* parties and groups which fought against the Nazi invaders and which founded their present unity in that struggle for national liberation. Each is following a policy which is designed to facilitate a durable world peace (agreement among the great powers), to minimize internal struggles and to promote political and economic collaboration with *both* the Soviet Union to the east and with Britain and America to the west.

Two characteristic features mark the internal economic policies of these lands as being more nearly of the type represented by France and Britain rather than attempts to copy the Soviet system. These are the preservation of the principle of private property intact, and the consequent limitation of the program of nationalization of industries within the framework of

This is the third in a series by Earl Browder, former head of the Communist Party of America, who was expelled from party membership this year.

The New Republic, which believes in liberal democracy, is of course opposed on principle to communism. We publish Browder's series for its intrinsic interest and value.

The fourth article, to appear next week, will discuss the question of a loan to Russia.

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